



Ann Arbor City Council

BUILDING EFFICIENT MEETINGS

Practices and Recipes

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A report from the Meeting Masters Research Project

or

How to get as little done as you do now in half the time

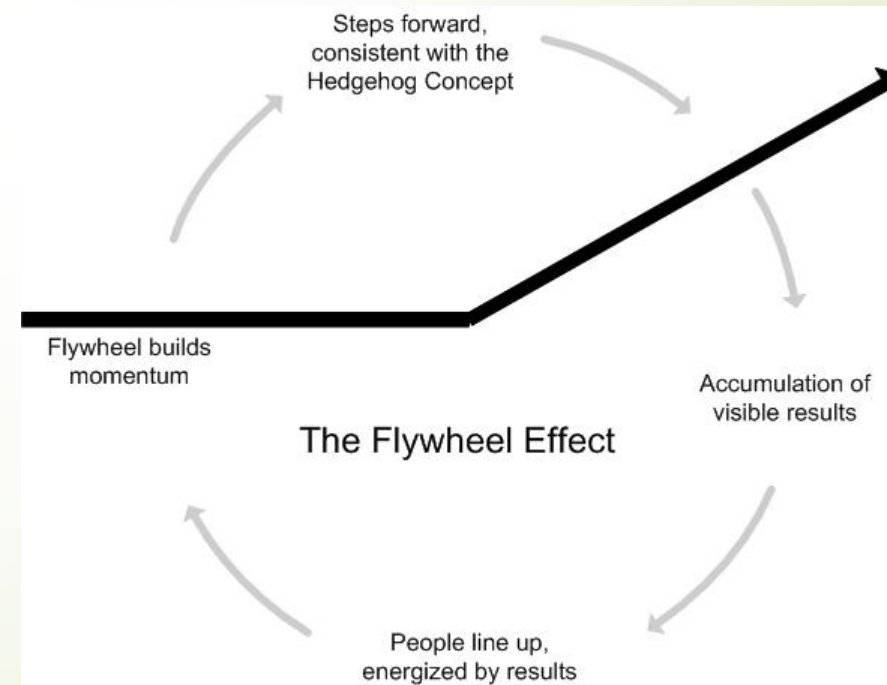
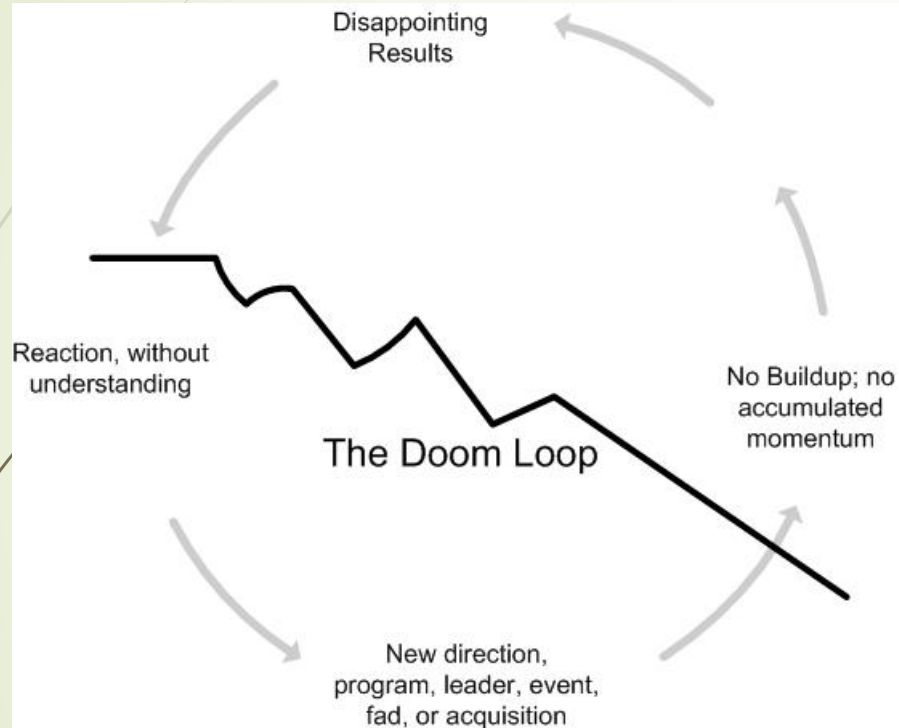
July 12th 7-8:45PM

The Meeting Masters Research Project

- A series of observations and interviews with women and men who produced excellent meetings
- How was excellence defined?
 - Snowball sampling
 - Participants wanted to go there
 - Participants experienced and vocalized a sense of ongoing accomplishment
 - My team thought there would be commonalities in the successful patterns and structures that emerged and there were
 - These groups tapped into the deeper structure of excellence
 - They avoided the DOOM LOOP and captured the energy of the FLYWHEEL

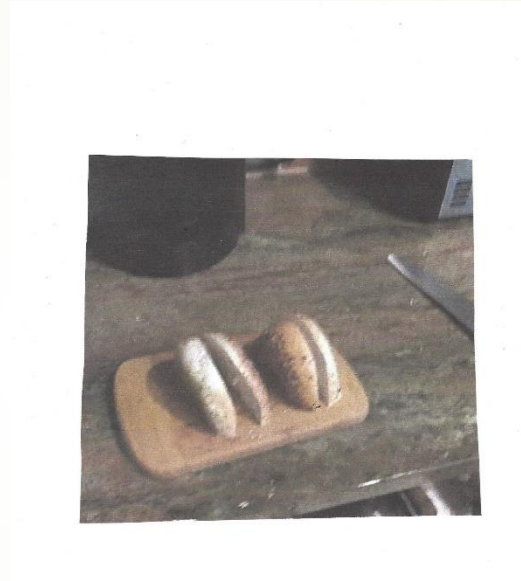
From The Doom Loop to The Flywheel

by Jim Collins



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There is always a better way



Common Errors

- ▶ How Many 9s in the array from 0-100?
 - ▶ Get your answer (do not speak it)
 - ▶ Check your work

- ▶ Let's see how we did

Common Conceptualizations of The Meeting Masters

- **A fresh conceptualization of the group's "work"**
 - Success is accomplishment through building High Quality Decisions.
 - Individual differences in skills and orientations existed in each but were handled by constant accommodation and eyes on the prize
 - They clearly distinguished between "meetings" and "forums"
 - The goal was not only better meetings but High Quality Decisions



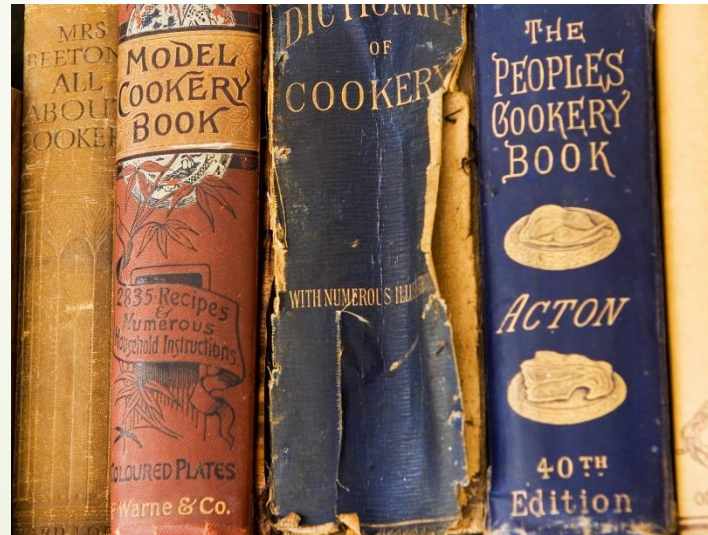
Overall Points

- Individual differences existed, of course, but this work was a collective effort
- They met about half as long or half as frequently as typical
- As one Chair put it, “We get as little done as we used to in half the time.”
- Most common was the analogy to an orchestra performance or a small ensemble



Overall points

- This material is like a recipe book
- Use what you can adapt to your culture
- But first, start with the recipe



Common Practices

- They rarely met at night
 - Many started at 7am, using the Hospital model
- They avoided food at meetings but socialized a bit before and /or after
- They respected the clock
- All had terms of reference: a set of goals and expectations for their work together.

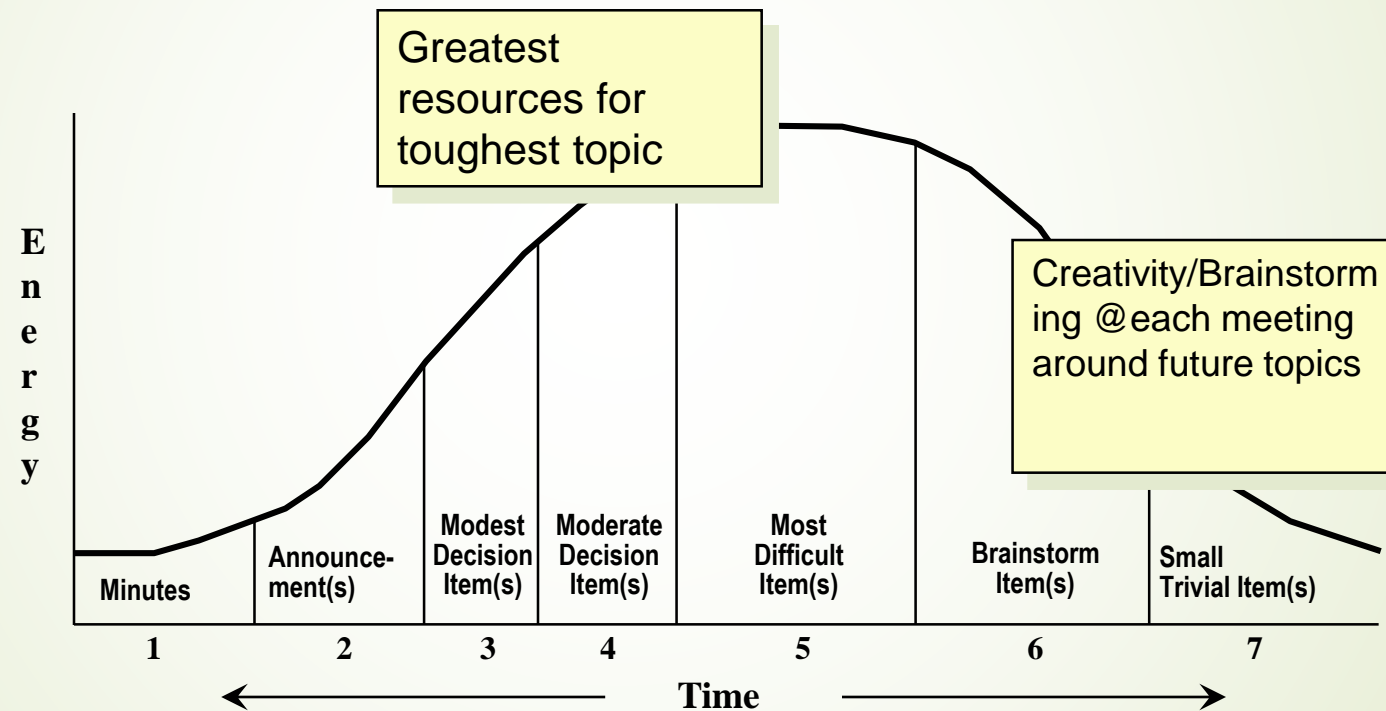


Common Tools

- The Agenda Bell
 - A meeting is a graph of time over energy
- The Menu Agenda
 - The Urgent /Important Grid
- The 3 Options Rule for subcommittee reports

Increasing Efficiency and Creativity in Decision Making Meetings

- Using the Agenda Bell



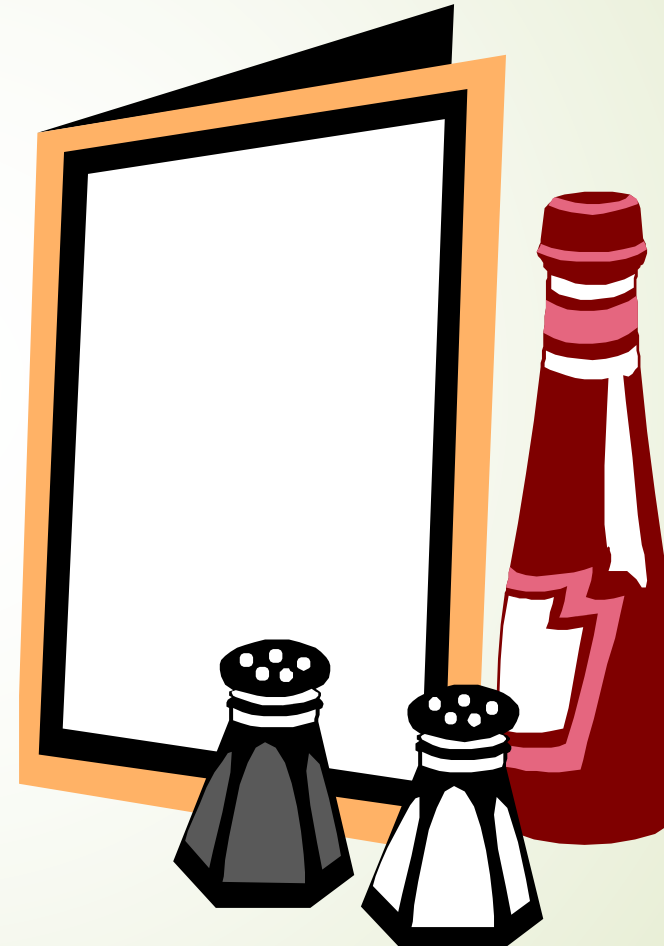
The Menu Agenda

- Item
- A small explanation of it
- clock time (a meeting without times is like a menu w/o prices!)

THE MENU AGENDA

13

- 1. Minutes 2:00-2:05
- 2. Announcements 2:05-2:10
*New Desks Ordered
1000\$ each to your account*
- 3. Retreat Location (Action) 2:10-2:15
Key West seems Best
- 4a. Vendor Selection (Action) 2:15-2:25
*A new vendor for gaskets
would like some business*
- 4b. Disposal of Broken
Gaskets (Action) 2:25-2:35
trash? Sell abroad/ fix?
- 5. Permission to Ship (Action) 2:35-3:00
*Ship part with scratch?
Give Discount?*
- 6. Improving Quality (Brains) 3:00-3:38
- 7. Adjourn 3:38-3:40



The Urgent/Important Grid

		Urgent	Urgent
Important	Low	Item(s)3 – modest decision items	Item(s) 4 &6 – moderate decision items/Brainstorming
	High	Item(s)4 – moderate decision items	Item 5 – the toughest item

The Three Options Rule for Reports

The Words

- The Problem
- Three Options
- The Recommendation
- And why

The Visual

Decision Making

Your Company Name



Common Norms

- Respect the Agenda
- Respect the Clock
 - The mind cannot accept more than the seat can endure!
 - Beware of Comatosis Rectus
- Respect People and Ideas
 - Body language counts!
 - The eye roll
 - The shielded vomit gesture



Questions/Comments, Reflections

- What are your key takeaways? (one at a time)
- What can you use?
 - Council
 - Subgroups
 - What might you try that could improve your meetings ?
- How could you practice?